Saipan Tribune CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIII, Issue No. 352 THURSDAY DECEMBER 18, 2003 www.saipantribune.com 50 c

INSIDE

2 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2004 SAIPAN TRIBUNE



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mcdo

WEATHER FORECAST

PICTURE TIME: 2:25 A.M., DECEMBER 17, 2003

Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A monsoon trough extends from 6N130E through a tropical disturbance near 8N145E and finally to near 5N160E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the disturbance are found in the Mariana islands as well as between Yap and Chuuk or between 4N and 16N from 139E to 153E. Just east of the monsoon trough, a surface trough of low pressure continues to near the equator at 168E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are developing north and east of the trough or within 100 miles either side of a line from 9N160E to the equator at 173E, including Kosrae. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms across portions of the Marshall islands, between 4N and 16N from 170E to 180.



SAIPAN AND TINIAN

Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.

Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers. **Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.



GUAM AND ROTA

Cloudy and breezy with scattered showers, some Cloudy and Dieczy with Scattered and locally heavy, and a slight chance of thunderstorms.

Winds: East at 20-25 mph. Gusting in 35 mph in showers. **Temperature:** Lows near 78. Highs near 86.



PALAU
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.



POHNPEI

Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Winds: East at 10 kt.



YAP AND ULITHI Partly cloudy with

isolated showers. Winds: Northeast at 10 kt.



KOSRAE

Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Winds: Southeast at 10 kt.



CHUUK

Mostly cloudy with scattered showers with a slight chance of thunderstorms. Winds: Northeast at 10-15 kt.



MAJURO

Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

	CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW	
4	Auckland	Cloudy	61F (16C)	49F (9C)	
*	Beijing	Sunny	44F (7C)	26F (-3C)	
4	Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	61F (16C)	
4	Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	86F (30C)	72F (22C)	
4	London, England	Cloudy	56F (13C)	45F (7C)	
4	Los Angeles	Cloudy	69F (21C)	51F (11C)	
4	Manila	Cloudy	88F (31C)	71F (22C)	
*	Melbourne	Sunny	73F (23C)	54F (12C)	
4	Miami	Partly Cloudy	84F (29C)	75F (24C)	
2	New York, NY	Cloudy	52F (11C)	48F (9C)	
1	Osaka	Rain	54F (12C)	46F (8C)	
4	Paris	Cloudy	53F (12C)	41F (5C)	
1	Pusan	Rain	58F (14C)	43F (6C)	
4	Rome	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	39F (4C)	
1	Salem, Oregon	Rain	54F (12C)	38F (3C)	
*	San Francisco	Sunny	64F (18C)	47F (5C)	
1	Seoul	Rain	52F (11C)	45F (7C)	
1	Tokyo	Rain	55F (13C)	49F (9C)	
P	Washington, DC	Cloudy	60F (16C)	48F (9C)	



tribune

Opinion



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John Pangelinan PUBLISHER Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR

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Ap The Associated Press	Pacific Islands News Association
EDITORIAL	
EDITORIAL	

Los Angeles Times

The Saipan Tribune welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.



Deception's role in war coverage

By JAMES P. PINKERTON Special to Newsday

Pinkerton is a Newsday columnist.



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Our World At War



CARONEL CUC ROTA

10 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Good Housekeeping

Cooking with Chef Singh



The Good Life

verizon 60th ww2 cmyk	triple j

The Good Life

14 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004

AGROSS THE NATION	
	hermans +red
stevedore	

20 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004

United States

Across the Globe

22 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004 **23** SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Life & Style

Letterman tapes Christmas Eve show in Iraq

David Letterman brought his late-night show to Marines serving in Iraq on Friday, loosening up the Camp Taqaddum crowd with the line, "Anybody here from out of town?"

Letterman brought along musical director Paul Shaffer, stage manager Biff Henderson, comedian Tom Dreesen and the band Off the Wall.

When hands flew in the air in response to requests for a volunteer to help deliver the opening monologue, he asked: "Isn't that how you got here?"

With the help of cue cards held by an Army soldier, Letterman ran off a series of crowd-pleasers:

"Iraqi elections are in January. Hurry up and pick somebody so we can get the hell out of here," he said.

And: "If I wanted to face insurgents I would've spent Christmas with my relatives."

Letterman has repeatedly featured Marines on "The Late Show."

"Paul and I were in Afghanistan three years ago, and last year we were in Baghdad," Letterman told the crowd. "We wouldn't want it any other way.

Prince heads list of concert moneymakers

NEW YORK (AP)—Prince is the concert tour king. He's in the No. 1 spot on Pollstar's Top 25 tours chart for 2004, grossing \$87.4 million.

His 69-city/96-show tour was "by far the biggest tour he has ever done," Gary Bongiovanni, editor-in-chief of Pollstar, the concert industry trade publication, told The Associated Press. "It's kind of a renaissance for him."

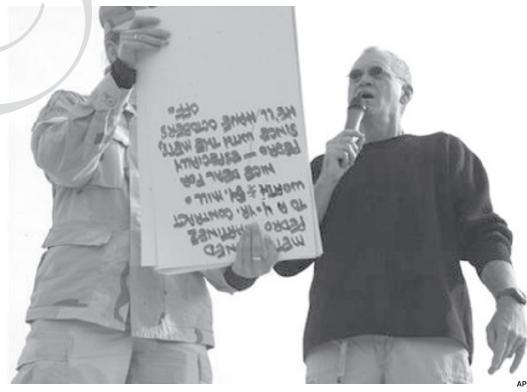
Celine Dion, who's been appearing at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas for a long string of shows, was in second place, coming in at \$80.4 million, followed by Madonna, \$79.5 million; Metallica, \$60.5 million; and Bette Midler, \$59.4 million.

Other acts in the top 10: Van Halen, Kenny Chesney, Sting, Toby Keith and Elton John.

It was a good year for country music. Chesney's tour had a total gross of \$50.8 million and Keith's grossed \$43.7 million. Tim McGraw, Shania Twain and Alan Jackson's tour with Martina McBride were also among the top 25.

Bongiovanni said he wasn't surprised that most of the top acts were familiar faces.

"Just because baby boomers are older now doesn't mean that they turn into Glenn Miller band fans," he told the AP Thursday. "They are a large population base of people that have the funds."



In this picture released by the U.S. Marines, an Army soldier holds up cue cards as comedian David Letterman delivers his opening monologue written specifically for the troops during "The Late Show" at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, on Friday, Dec. 24, 2004.

We're sorry we keep having to come back. If you ever come to New York City, come see us and we'll treat you like big shots."

have been deployed since late summer, welcomed the visit.

"It was great, all of the Marines getting together having a The Marines, most of who good time," said Gunnery Sgt.

Ronald Trignano, 32, a techcontroller with Communication Squadron 48. "It almost makes you forget where you are for a little while." (AP)

NH boy receives Reeve's van

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)— Christopher Reeve played a superhero in the movies, and now, two months after his death, he's a superhero to a 14-year-old boy.

Tyler Howard of Charlestown is a quadriplegic and has been in a wheelchair for 10 years. On Thursday, Reeve's family gave Howard the late actor's specially modified van, so he can get around with his wheelchair and other medical equipment.

"I'm free, I'm free," Howard said. "I can go where I want."

Howard said he always wanted to be able to attend school functions, visit classmates and go to church and family outings. Until now, he could only go to school and his doctor's appointments.

Reeve, 52, died Oct. 10 of 25, 2002.



Christopher Reeve speaks to the press as his wife Dana looks on at the birthday parties of Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Barbara Walters, Ron Meyer, and his own, at the 12th Annual "A Magical Birthday Bash" in New York Wednesday, Sept. complications from an infection caused by a bedsore.

He won worldwide fame in four "Superman" films from 1978-87. After his May 1995 horse riding accident, he became a spokesman for spinal cord injury victims.

Howard was chosen to receive Reeve's van from thousands of potential recipients.

"I hope the van brings you great joy and freedom as it did for Chris," wrote Dana Reeve, the actor's widow, in a letter.

Howard, who requires 24hour care, developed quadriplegia following a virus he contracted when he was 4. He is dependent on a ventilator and has a tracheotomy.

He said his all-time favorite film hero is Superman.

Union: Diana Ross got special treatment

GREENWICH, Conn. (AP)— serve her jail sentence in Green- cent, police said. Arizona's legal Police Chief James Walters gave Diana Ross special treatment while the singer served her sentence for an Arizona drunken-driving conviction, the town's police union said.

Ross pleaded no contest in February and was sentenced to two days in jail. She arranged to wich, where she lives.

The former lead singer for the Supremes was arrested Dec. 30, 2002, after a driver called to report a car traveling south in the northbound lanes outside Tucson.

Tests showed Ross had a blood-alcohol level of 0.20 perlimit for drivers is 0.08.

Walters allowed Ross to have a cell phone in her jail cell, have food delivered and let her go home in the middle of her sentence, the police union said in a 44-page report to public officials that was given to the Greenwich Time.

Brando ex-business manager files lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Marlon Brando's former business manager filed a \$3.5 million claim against his estate, alleging the Oscar winner sexually harassed her and breached their contract by removing her as a co-executor of his will days before his death.

The lawsuit comes nearly six months after Brando died of lung failure July 1 in Los Angeles. He was 80.

The claim, submitted by lawyers for Jo An Corrales of Kalama. Wash., savs Brando "caused a hostile work environment due

to his continuous acts of sexual harassment." The claim says the harassment continued throughout her employment from December 2000 until March 8.

No other details of the allegations were included in the claim filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Couple's minor spat signals major marriage meltdown

By AVIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: A month ago, I celebrated my 10th wedding anniversary. My husband and I have been together for 12 years. He didn't lay a hand on me until a year ago.

We got into an argument on Valentine's Day, and he slapped me twice that night. It happened again last month. We separated after the second incident, but I couldn't afford to move out because I've been a stay-at-home mom for six years.



Tonight we had a minor spat, and he broke my nose. An hour later, his 21-year-old girlfriend drove over and picked him up, and here my 7-year-old son and I sit, while he not only gets sympathy, but also companionship and sex.

Abby, please tell young women that getting involved with married men isn't just stupid; it's dangerous—and often to the woman he's married to when the single woman comes into his life.

BRUISED IN ST. LOUIS

DEAR BRUISED: I'm broadcasting your message, but don't expect much response. Men who cheat on their wives are not above lying to their girlfriends. No doubt he has filled her head with what a terrible wife you are and how unhappy you have made him. That's the "lure" to snag her in the role of "rescuer."

Perhaps you should warn her so she doesn't become victim No. 2. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, have some taken of you before your bruises heal. The police should also be contacted, and the battery put on record.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have one child, and we have decided that we are having no more. People frequently ask when we're having another child, and when we say, "Never!" they always demand to know why.

When we tell them our reasons, they go on and on about how we shouldn't make our little girl an only child and how "cruel" that would be to her.

What can we say to politely end everyone's incessant need to criticize us for not having more children? Do you agree that this is a rude question?

HAVING FUN WITH ONE IN N.Y.

DEAR HAVING FUN: I certainly do, because that question is often painful to answer. You might catch less flak if, instead of saying "Never!" you reply as my friend Sherry does. She says, "I had the first one. It's up to my husband to have the second." That usually stops 'em.

DEAR ABBY: I think my sister has an eating disorder. She's rail-thin and is always watching her calorie intake. My concern is that she does it with my 3-year-old nephew, too. She has the child on a strict diet, counting his carb and calorie intake. Her little boy is still eating baby food (made for ages 6 to 9 months), and I'm afraid he will develop an eating disorder, too. What can I do?

WORRIED AUNT IN VIRGINIA

DEAR WORRIED AUNT: Children have very different nutritional needs than adults, and your sister needs to be aware of what they are. Encourage your sister to consult her son's pediatrician about the eating program her child is on to assure he's getting the nutrients he needs for optimum brain and body development. A session with a dietitian who's credentialed by the American Dietetic Association would also be a good idea. (They have "R.D." after their names.)

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage













Packers beat Vikings to clinch NFC North



MINNEAPOLIS (AP)— Brett Favre bounced back from one of his familiar costly mistakes and rallied

the Green Bay Packers to another big victory—and another division title. Favre drove his team 76 yards to set up Ryan Longwell's 29-yard field goal as time ran out, lifting the Packers to a 34-31 victory over the Minnesota Vikings on Friday that clinched a third straight NFC North crown for Green Bay.

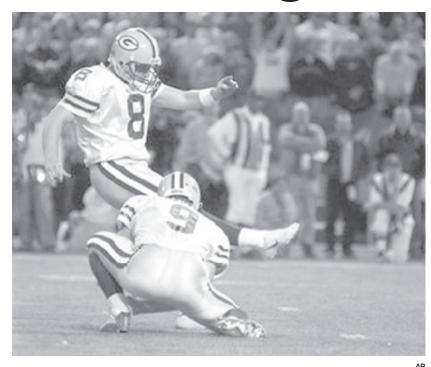
The Packers (9-6) trailed 31-24 with 8:18 left after Favre's third-down throw from his end zone was intercepted by Chris Claiborne and returned 12 yards for a touchdown.

The Vikings (8-7), however, couldn't get what they needed from a pass defense that has struggled all season long. Donald Driver—who had 11 receptions for 162 yards—made a nifty, falling-down catch of Favre's pass on fourth-andgoal at the 3 to tie it at 31 with 3:34 remaining after an 80-yard drive.

Minnesota, which can clinch a wildcard playoff spot with a loss by either Carolina or St. Louis this weekend, appeared on its way to retaking the lead.

But a holding penalty on Matt Birk the Vikings were flagged nine times for 78 yards—wiped out a 16-yard run by Michael Bennett that would have given them the ball at the Green Bay 40 just before the 2-minute warning.

After a punt, Favre got the ball at his



Green Bay kicker Ryan Longwell (8) kicks a 29-yard field goal with 3 seconds left to beat the Minnesota Vikings 34-31 Friday, Dec. 24, 2004. Bryan Barker (9) is

13 with 1:35 left. Twelve plays later, Longwell's kick sailed through the uprights—sending the Packers into celebration on their biggest rival's home field.

Favre finished 30-for-43 for 365 yards, three touchdowns and the interception. Ahman Green, who left briefly with a head injury, carried 19 times for 64 yards and a score.

Daunte Culpepper went 16-for-23 for 285 yards, no turnovers and three touchdowns-on three consecutive passes in a wild second quarter in which 38 points were scored.

Nate Burleson, who had a career day against the Packers last month, caught two passes for 110 yards and a score. Randy Moss had a touchdown among chael Bennett finished with 159 total yards on 20 touches.

The Packers' secondary has had problems all season, and tackling was a major first-half deficiency.

Burleson caught a short pass over the middle on third-and-5, shed Darren Sharper and raced 42 yards to the Green Bay 26. Later on that drive, Moss caught a 12-yard scoring pass from Culpepper when Al Harris slipped and couldn't stay with him near the edge of the end zone.

After Green bulled in for a tying touchdown on fourth-and-goal at the 1, Burleson escaped from Ahmad Carroll's arms near midfield following a catch and sprinted for a 68-yard score to make it 14-7.

That's when the game really got crazy. After using their final timeout of the half - Green Bay coach Mike Sherman went 0-for-2 on challenges—the Packers tied it again when Favre found a wide-open Bubba Franks for a 22yard touchdown with 1:23 left.

Kelly Campbell returned the kickoff 55 yards, and Culpepper promptly threw a screen pass to Bennett-who sidestepped Nick Barnett at the line of scrimmage and scampered for a 38yard score to make it 21-14 with 1:08 remaining. Bennett blew by Carroll inside the 10 after the rookie cornerback made a shaky attempt at a tackle.

Antonio Chatman answered with a 59-yard kickoff return, giving Longwell a chance to make a 42-yard field goal as the half ended. A livid Vikings coach Mike Tice chucked his clipboard and pencil to the turf when an official clock stoppage for measurement allowed Green Bay time to gather for the kick with 4 seconds left.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE W L T Pct PF PA x-New England 12 2 0 .857 393 246

Buffalo Miami	8	6	0	.571	330	248 317
	5	''	O	.214	242	517
South						
x-Indianapolis	11	3	0	.786	474	287
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	248	253
Houston	6	8	0	.429	274	317
Tennessee	4	10	0	.286	304	383
North						
x-Pittsburgh	13	1	0	.929	323	220
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	280	225
Cincinnati	6	8	0	.429	313	340
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	247	366
West						
x-San Diego	11	3	0	.786	391	262
Denver	8	6	0	.571	311	274
Kansas City	6	8	0	.429	435	381
Oakland	5	9	0	.357	284	398

Dallas

NATIONAL CONFERENCE East xv-Philadelphia N.Y. Giants

0

.357 256 367

.500 319 326

.429 267 356

143 245 390

.357 209 234 Washington x-Atlanta .786 301 283 Carolina 0 .429 300 298 .429 301 374 Tampa Bav .357

North x-Green Bay Minnesota .600 393 366 .533 387 374 .357 258 313 Chicago .357 204 281

8

0

12 0 x-clinched division y-clinched conference

Yesterday's Games

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

EAST

West

St. Louis

No scores reported from the EAST.

SOUTH

No scores reported from the SOUTH.

MIDWEST No scores reported from the MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST

No scores reported from the SOUTHWEST.

FAR WEST

Washington 110, Houston 63

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB

BOSTON RED SOX-Agreed to terms with C Jason Varitek on a four-year contract. HANSHIN TIGERS-Signed OF Shane Spencer and RHP Jamie Brown.

INDIANA PACERS-Activated F-C Jermaine O'Neal from the suspended list. Waived F Mar-

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS-Placed DE Vonnie Holliday on injured reserve. Signed WR Richard Smith from the practice squad NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS-Released S Je'Rod

LIBERTY-Signed Ken Karcher, football coach, to a five-vear contract extension. TULANE-Extended the contract of Chris Scelfo,

football coach, through the 2009 season

By The Associated Press

SU's Saban weighs Dolphins coaching job

MIAMI (AP)—Miami Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga flew to Baton Rouge, La. on Friday, then returned to South Florida nine hours later without Nick Saban.

But the LSU coach might yet join the Dolphins.

Still weighing an offer the Dolphins made Wednesday, Saban met with Huizenga and team president Eddie Jones, then huddled with LSU athletic director Skip Bertman, then said he needed more time.

"In the next 24 to 48 hours we'll make a decision," Saban said in a statement released by LSU. "We certainly appreciate everyone's support, patience and understanding during this very difficult process."

Shortly before Huizenga departed Baton Rouge, Saban briefly boarded the plane, then got in his car and drove away. Saban and the Tigers are scheduled to fly Saturday to Orlando for their Jan. 1 bowl game against Iowa.

The coach's hesitancy in making the leap to the NFL is nothing new. He previously turned down overtures from at least five NFL teams, including Atlanta and Chicago a year ago.

"This is a gut-wrenching decision for Nick," Bertman said in a statement. "He needs, and deserves, the time necessary to make the right decision for him and his family.'

Huizenga, a billionaire businessman renowned for his ability to close a deal, arrived in Baton Rouge by private plane at 7 a.m. to make another pitch. He and Jones met with Saban at the coach's house. Saban then went to the athletic department offices to confer for more than two hours with his agent and Bertman.

Emerging from that meeting, Saban offered no hint that he'd made a decision.

"There's no timetable," he said.

When asked if he had a message for LSU fans, the coach said, "We just love the Tigers, and we're getting ready for the bowl game."

It was unclear whether money was part of the negotiations. Saban is the highest-paid coach in college football and in the first year of an \$18.45 million, seven-year deal, while the Dolphins' offer is believed to exceed \$4 million a year.

The job description is not believed to be an issue: Huizenga has offered Saban full authority over the football operation. Because of Huizenga's reputation as a hands-off owner, the Dolphins' job has special appeal even though they're 3-11 - their first losing season since 1988.

Baseball resolves dispute with umpires

NEW YORK (AP)— Three more umpires will be rehired by major league baseball and six more will split \$2.3 million in severance pay as part of a settlement of the nasty dispute that cost 22 umps their jobs in 1999.

The umpires will be brought back as part of a new five-year labor contract that was agreed to Wednesday, a deal that also settles the 1 1/2-year-old grievance umpires filed over a computer system baseball has used to evaluate plate umps.

Bob Davidson, an 18-year major league veteran, will get the next big league opening. Davidson, 52, umpired last season in the Class-A Midwest League and worked behind the plate in 77 games. He made \$13,000 in the minors, but would get a \$274,993 salary if he is back in the majors before opening day, which is likely.

"I can't tell you what a wonderful Christmas gift baseball gave me," he said Thursday during a telephone

interview. "Working in the low minor leagues was very humbling, to say the least. One thing I learned: I need baseball ... more than baseball needed me."

Many of the umpires had financial hardships since losing their big league jobs in September 1999. Davidson, who was on the road from April 4 to Sept. 20, missed the graduation of his daughter, Andrea, from Colorado State.

"They would have given me the time off, but at the time I couldn't afford the plane ticket," he said.

Tom Hallion and Ed Hickox will get two of the first five vacancies. That would raise the number of rehired umpires to 11, half the total who lost their jobs when a mass resignation strategy backfired. Hallion and Hickox also have been umpiring in the minors.

Six umpires will receive severance pay and health benefits for themselves and their families under Wednesday's deal. Jim Evans. Dale Ford. Eric Gregg. Ken Kaiser and Larry McCoy will get

\$400,000 each and Mark Johnson, who had less service time, will get \$325,000.

Rich Garcia, who became an umpire supervisor in 2002, said he likely will get severance pay and be included in the umpires' benefits plan.

"I think it's a big step in the right direction," Garcia said. "I think this will bring a lot of healing to the situation that has gone on the last five years. It was an ugly issue."

Still to be resolved is back pay for five umpires rehired as part of a partial settlement in 2002. A federal appeals court ruled Gary Darling, Bill Hohn, Larry Poncino, Larry Vanover and Joe West were entitled to the money, but baseball has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case.

Richie Phillips, head of the former union, is pursing his own lawsuit against baseball.

"This whole thing would have been resolved a long time ago had Richie Phillips pursued the interests of the umpires he misadvised rather than his own personal interests," said Rob Manfred, baseball's executive vice president of labor relations.

Phillips, whose Major League Umpires Association was replaced by the World Umpires Association in late 1999, did not return a message left at his office in suburban Philadelphia.

"The union is particularly happy that in this agreement we were able to clean up some of the unfortunate consequences of the 1999 fiasco," WUA lawyer Larry Gibson said.

Details of the labor contract and grievance settlement were first reported Wednesday by The New York Times.

The contract calls for 5 percent annual increases. Next year's salary scale ranges from \$87,859 to \$357,530, the maximum going to umpires with 27 years of major league service. In addition, up to 15 umpires can decide from Feb. 1 to April 30 whether to accept a retirement package.

The Week in Sports



Refaluwasch Golf Association 2004 Club Championship winner Mario Taitano is flanked by RGA officials Tony Satur, left, and Jess Wabol



Roman Rodriguez of Hyatt Troops won MVP honors in the 2004 Fall season of the CNMI Billiards League. Flanking Rodriguez are organizers Kim and Fred Prinze.

Top Pool Bar 9-Ball champion Roger Espiritu, flanked by runner-up Vic S. Hocog, left, and third place Rolly Villanueva, show of his \$500 earnings Monday morning at the Garapan

MARK RABAGO



No games of the 2004 Government Basketball League were held Monday because of a scheduling snafu. Just the same teams already at the venue scrimmages against each other. Photo above shows the score in the "friendly" game between Commonwealth Ports Authority and Depart-

MARK RABAGO

ment of Public Safety II.

10 are Paul Pangelinan (810), Ronald Epan (760), Ador Dimaano (704),

Arnel Del Rosario (694), and Robert Talavera (694). On the outside looking in are Alex Cacdac (882), Jonathan Hensley (625), Michael Guirey (580), John Santos (561), and Edgar Talavera (495).

Halstead gets to add to his considerable lead starting today when SBA holds its December King of the Lanes competition at the CBC in Garapan.

tor Ross Zapanta said that today's roll-off would begin as early as 4pm, while Monday's competition starts at 6pm. Awarding ceremonies immediately follow the end of competition on Monday.

For more information on the Pepsi King of the Lanes Tournament, e-mail SBA through Zapanta at zapanta@vzpacifica.net or Dimaano at ador dimaano@tanholdings.com.

Happy holidays

By MARK RABAGO REPORTER

porting events were as scarce

as finding The Incredibles action figures in toy store shelves the past week. But that doesn't mean the week

of Dec. 17-24 was bereft of exciting action as the Refaluwasch Golf Association and Top Pool Bar held their yearly championships.

On Saturday, Mario Taitano emerged victorious in the RGA Club Championship held at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort Saipan west course. He bested the likes of 2003 champion Sasaki Oliver and Suva South Pacific Games

veterans Jess Wabol, Joe "Kamikaze" Camacho, and Eddie Peter.

Roger Espiritu, meanwhile, proved that he's still the meanest pool player around following his victory in the Top Pool Bar \$1K 9-Ball Tournament that ended in the daylight breaking hours of Monday. The man they dub "The Ghost" defeated Vic S. Hocog in the race-to-seven finals.

Last week also saw action continue in the 2004 Government Basketball League, and both the fast pitch and slow pitch varieties of the Island Wide Softball League. Local track and field athletes also came home from their stint in the Oceania Open and Under 18 Area Championships in Australia last Monday.



The Hazmat team pose after taking home second place in the 2004 Fall season of the CNMI Billiards League.

Hyatt Troops show off their championship hardware after topping the 2004 Fall Season of the **CNMI Billiards** League during its awards ceremony Wednesday.

MARK RABAGO



poses during the closing ceremony for the Oceania Open and Under 18 Area Championships at the Townsville Sports Reserve in Queensland, Australia. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI track and field team

HALSTEAD...

From Page 28

selle Zapanta are a far second and third behind Halstead in the BRS. Raymond is 622 points short of Halstead's total with his 1,090 points. His victories include triumphs in the March King of the Lanes, 2004 PBA Bowler of the Year, and the ABC Classified last month.

Older brother Ruselle is a mere 74 points behind Raymond with 1,016 points. The Northern Marianas College student won both the February and April editions of the Pepsi-sponsored tournament and also did well in a handful of competitions. Both Raymond, who studies at Kagman High School, and Ruselle are members of the CNMI Youth Bowling Team.

Currently running fourth in the BRS

is veteran kegler Dannie Robles. He has several strong performances in the year and is in striking distance of third place with 922 points. Former youth bowler Simon Manacop occupies the fifth spot with his 856 points. Manacop won the January and August Pepsi King of the Lanes tournaments.

Making up the rest of the BRS Top

SBA officer and tournament direc-

Kobe downplays first game against Shaq



28 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2004

Kobe Bryant took a moment to ponder the persistent questioning, and the words came tumbling out.



Happy holidays

Sporting events were as scarce as finding The Incredibles action figures on toy store shelves the past week.

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

No busy signal for Verizon in Open League

By MARK RABAGO

erizon won the 2004 Fall Season of the CNMI Open Billiards League behind a school of pool sharks led by Roger Espiritu and Jerry Soriano.

The team wiped the floor with second-place Man Fotten Gaga to capture the season championship. They were awarded their trophies during

the league's awards ceremony held at a Garapan venue last Wednesday.

The final score (69-41) was laughable with Verizon virtually wrapping up the title weeks before the final match.

The CNMI Open Billiards League only had two teams, in part because other teams pulled out at the start of the competition because of the strength of the Verizon squad.

Their fears proved well founded, as Verizon lost only once against Man Fotten Gaga in the nine-week long tournament.

Verizon got off to a shaky start, nipping Man Fotten Gaga (7-6) on Oct. 12. In Week 2, however, the team gave a preview of things to come when it dominated its rival (9-4). The Oct. 26 encounter was also a nocontest (8-4). Man Fotten Gaga caught Verizon napping but was only able to come up with a tie (7-7) on Week 4. They finally

got Verizon's number on Nov. 9 (9-4). But went back to losing mode, dropping the last four matches—8-2 on Week 6, 9-4 on Week 7, 8-3 on Week 8, and 9-2 on Week 9 that concluded the competition on Dec. 7.

Aside from Espiritu and Soriano, the Verizon team is also made up of notable cue artists Rommel Crisotomo, Santi Sablan, Senen Pangilinan, and Erick Santos.

Espiritu is a local pool legend dubbed by many as "The

> Ghost" for the way he tingles the spine of opponents. He also won the \$1K Top Pool Bar 9-Ball Tournament at the Garapan sports bar

Soriano, for his part, is nearing Espirituesque status because of his recent string of victories, which included four straight weeks of topping the Corner Pocket 9-Ball Tournament.

Crisostomo has also proven his mettle in past pool tournaments and is slowly making a name for himself on Saipan. Sablan is an up-and-coming player, who admits he still has a lot to learn, while Pangilinan and Santos are at par with Espiritu and Soriano.

It was a tighter contest in the CNMI Billiard League with Hyatt Troops holding back the late charge of Hazmat to win the championship of the B division.

Hyatt Troops finished the 2004 fall season with 71 points with its six-point output on the

final week proving enough to spoil the comeback hopes of Hazmat, which came up three points short (68 points) despite scoring a solid 10 last Dec. 7.

Making up the Hyatt Troops are Larry Briones, Cezar Poblete, Ed Manucdoc, Brendyl Roma, Toto Silvestre, and Frank Codog. Players for Hazmat, meanwhile, are Russell Powell, Roman Rodriguez, Richard Celestine, Rodel Dela Cruz, Rick Elefante, and Romy "Colonel" Sotto.

Coming in third behind Hyatt Troops and Hazmat was Subsea Shooters, which wound up with a 66. Its players are Eric Montano, Alexander Ayeras, Rex Reyes, Ganover, Rettin, Robert Sanciangco, and Willie Roman.

The rest of the B division standings, with their scores, in parenthesis, are as follows: Da X Terminators (63), Marines I (56), Fotten Gaga (54), Team Cat (52), Marines II (39), Sang & The Gang II (36) and Sang & The Gang I (31).

CNMI Open Billiards League and CNMI Billiards League organizers Fred and Kim Prinze also handed out the MVP of the B division last Wednesday at Club Taboo. Taking home the coveted plum was Roman Rodriguez of Hazmat.

Team Verizon, from top left clockwise, Rommel Crisostomo, Santi Sablan, Jerry Soriano, Roger Espiritu, and Senen Pangilinan. (Not in photo is Erick Santos)



Hasltead: Sure bet to top SBA rankings

By MARK RABAGO



"The Mark Hal-Shark" stead is swimming alone at the top of the

Bowling Ranking System of the Saipan Bowling Association with only the December Pepsi King of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament left on the schedule.

Halstead, which has long been regarded as the No. 1 bowler of the Commonwealth, has so far accumulated a whopping 1,712 points. He has earned 327 points from 11 Pepsi King of the Lanes events.

The left-hander also got 100 points for topping the February Philippine Bowling Association Classified Tournament, 80 points from the Saipan Bowling Center Wednesday League



MARK RABAGO

Mark "The Shark" Halstead, seen here in a file photo with Gigi Zapanta, leads all bowlers with 1,712 points in the SBA Bowling Ranking System.

last March, 80 points from the SBC Friday League also last March, 80 points from the Capitol Bowling Center Thursday League last June, 80 points from the SBC Tuesday League last July, 80 points from the SBC Saturday League also last July, 100 points from the annual PBA Classified Tournament, 160 points from the 2004 PBA Bowler of the Year Tournament, 80 points from CBC Friday League last September, 75 points from the SBC Friday League last October, and 70 from the ABC Classified Tournament last month.

But Halstead's biggest breakthrough of the year came in the SBC May Masters Tournament, where he picked up 395 points, which included 200 points from winning the masters event.

Brothers Raymond and Ru-See HALSTEAD on Page 27

Serves up at Hyatt Regency Saipan

get a chance to burn extra pounds they put on during the recent holiday binge on the first Sunday of the New Year.

Elan Christmas Volleyball Centre in the duration of the Classic kicks off on Jan. 2, competition. They also get a 2005 at the Hyatt Regency 20 percent discount on food Saipan sand court.

The tournament is being organized by Club Elan and sponsored by Pacific Trading Co. massages for the day. and Miller Lite.

Action gets underway at 9:30am following the 9am registration—there's no preregistration requirement. Cost of entry is \$15 per persons with members of the Northern Marianas Islands Volleyball Association getting a \$5 discount.

Club Elan, PTC, and Miller Lite have prepared cash and

Beach volleyball players will in-kind prizes for the top teams of the Christmas Volleyball Classic.

Participants of the tournament also get free access to The 6th Annual Club the Club Elan Spa and Fitness

> and beverages at both Splash and Skipper's beachside bar, and 30-40 percent discounts on

Club Elan manager Faheem Ebrahim said that a portion of the proceeds from the tournament would go towards NMI-VA's efforts to send a team to the South Pacific Mini Games next July.

For further inquiries, contact Ebrahim by calling 234-1242 ext. 27 or via email at febrahim@hyattsaipan.com. (Mark Rabago)